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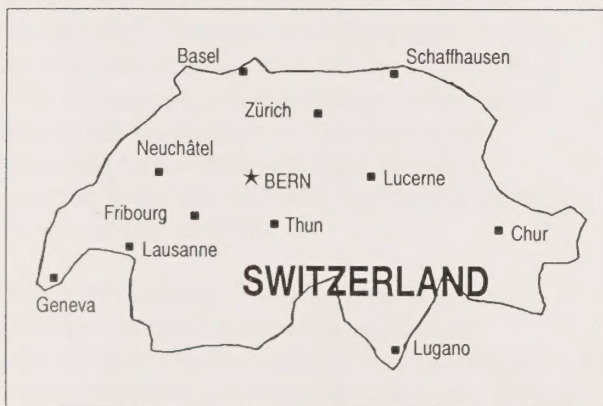
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GEOGRAPHY

Switzerland is located in Central Europe, east of France. The total area is 41,290 km². The land area is 39,770 km². Switzerland's land boundaries total 1,852 km; shared with Austria (164 km), France (573 km), Italy (740 km), Liechtenstein (41 km), and Germany (334 km). The climate is temperate, but varies with the altitude; winters are

cold, cloudy, rainy or snowy; summers are cool to warm, cloudy, and humid with occasional showers. The terrain is mostly mountains (Alps in the south, Jura in the northwest) with a central plateau of rolling hills, plains, and large lakes. Switzerland's natural resources include hydropower potential, timber, and salt.



DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of Switzerland reached 7,079,500 including 19.6 percent foreigners in 1995.

Seventeen percent of the population is under the age of 14 years, 68 percent is between 15 to 64 years old, and 15 percent is 65 years and over.

The population growth rate was 0.57 percent in 1995. The birth rate was 1.204 births per 100 population. The death rate was .916 deaths per 100 population. The net migration rate was 2.82 migrants per 1,000 population.

The nationality of Switzerland is Swiss. Ethnic divisions include German (65 percent), French (18 percent), Italian (10 percent), Romansch (1 percent), and other (6 percent). Religions include Roman Catholic (47.6 percent), Protestant (44.3 percent), and other (8.1 percent).

ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Switzerland's economy—one of the most prosperous and stable in the world—is nonetheless undergoing a stressful adjustment after both the inflationary boom of the late 1980s and the electorate's rejection of membership in the European Economic Area (EEA) in 1992. So far the decision to remain outside the European single market structure does not appear to have harmed Swiss interests.

The Swiss economy is mired in a deep recession. Swiss output has declined for 6 consecutive quarters through to the second quarter of 1996. In fact, Switzerland has had practically no growth since 1991. The depressed state of the economy is attributed to the strong Swiss franc, fiscal retrenchment and continuing declines in the construction sector.

Capital investment in equipment was the only sector in the economy showing strong growth through 1995. The pace in capital goods spending, however, slowed sharply in the second quarter of 1996. In addition, exports declined in the second quarter, the first decline in 3 years. Only the household sector showed a slight pickup in spending in the first half of 1996 after declining in the second half of 1995.

Efforts by the Swiss National Bank to boost growth by loosening monetary policy were unsuccessful. The discount rate was lowered in 4 stages from late 1994 through December 1995, when it was reduced to the current level of 1.5 percent.

The recent trade-weighted appreciation of the Swiss currency has not only induced domestic producers to shift to imported inputs, but has also reduced Swiss export competitiveness. The Swiss franc may well have appreciated at a very bad time in the global economic cycle. Switzerland is a major supplier of investment goods and should be one of the primary beneficiaries of the current worldwide investment boom. However, Swiss exporters are losing market shares due to the evolution of the exchange rate.

The labour market situation is not improving. The low (less than 1 percent) unemployment rate enjoyed through the late 1980s is a thing of the past and the average number of registered jobless is forecasted to be at least 5.2 percent in 1997.

In spite of the weak growth scenario, other elements of the Swiss economic picture look good. All levels of government have taken serious measures to reduce the substantial budget deficits of the last years, so that the situation of public finance should improve. The overall government deficit was expected to fall to approximately 3 percent of GDP in 1996.

Switzerland has a free market economy based on the principles of free enterprise. Freedom of trade and of industry are guaranteed by the federal constitution, and state intervention is minimal.

Government policy is primarily aimed at providing the economy with favourable market conditions—stable currency and prices, an efficient infrastructure, and training opportunities for required skills.

POLITICAL OVERVIEW

Switzerland has a relatively weak federal government and no recent tradition of executive leadership wielded by one individual. Many executive and administrative powers are vested in the 26 cantonal governments rather than in the federal government in Bern.

Federal executive decision-making is undertaken by the seven-member Federal Council (cabinet). Its members head the various federal ministries: Treasury, Foreign Affairs, Justice, Economics, Interior, Transportation and Energy, and Defence. The entirely ceremonial position of President of the Federal Council (head of government) is rotated annually among the councillors according to seniority. The Federal Council strives to present a collegial image and to govern by consensus. Its deliberations are private. Contentious issues that cannot be decided by consensus are determined by majority vote, results of which are not released.

Treaties, agreements, and legislation approved by the Parliament are subject to challenge by popular vote in Switzerland's unique system of initiative and referendum procedures. These votes allow unusually intense popular involvement in the legislative process and keep the federal government under pressure and scrutiny. Most of the interesting moments in Swiss politics occur during these initiative and referendum campaigns.

In the wake of the Swiss voters' rejection of the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement in 1992, the Swiss federal government is attempting to negotiate bilateral sectoral agreements with the European Union. To what extent the government will succeed—and on what terms—is a major political issue that will affect the domestic business climate.

The Swiss federal government is committed to achieve EU membership as a long-term goal,

although this course is opposed by a significant number of Swiss.

Under Switzerland's federal, cantonal and communal systems of governing, the federal government is responsible for such national interest issues as foreign affairs, internal and external security, customs, communications, and monetary control, while the cantons control all other state functions. In many cases, the federal government simply legislates and supervises, while the 26 cantons implement the legislation. The cantons enjoy a high degree of administrative authority, with their own constitutions and laws. The communes, of which there are over 3,000, also enjoy a high degree of independence, control local issues, and even collect taxes. All 3 levels of government have little direct involvement in manufacturing and services.

Indirect involvement is evident in the extensive number of government regulations, especially at the local level. Building codes, regulated hours of establishment, labour laws, zoning ordinances, garbage control, noise codes and administered prices are examples of areas where rules and regulations are more pervasive than in Canada. Mandatory health insurance is a typical example of the Swiss approach to government involvement in the economy: insurance and health care are provided privately, but the government requires employees to have the insurance (and subsidizes those who cannot afford it).

While government regulation is generally quite extensive, in the area of competition law the situation is the opposite. Cartels are openly permitted and are only broken up when the government succeeds in proving that they are socially and economically harmful—a daunting challenge the government rarely attempts.

TRADE POLICY

Switzerland is the 12th largest export market for Canada, valued at \$533 million in 1995, a 40-percent decrease from 1994 when the total was \$894 million. Imports accounted for \$902 million, an 18-percent increase from 1994 when the total was \$763 million.

It is important to note that gold comprised just under one half of Canada's exports to Switzerland

in 1995. The fluctuation in the price of gold is thus mostly responsible for the change in the trade balance. In fact, non-gold exports have risen by over 25 percent in the last 3 years.

Canada is the third most favoured overseas destination for Swiss tourists after the U.S. and Thailand. Switzerland is Canada's 6th most important source of foreign direct investment.

HOUSING SECTOR

Overview

Switzerland had an estimated 3.01 million households within a population of 7.09 million inhabitants as of 1995. In the previous year, a total of 11,88 billion ECU (1 ECU = 0,774 SF) had been allocated to new housing (9,11 billion ECU), renovation and housing rehabilitation (2,77 billion ECU).

Local Technology

The Swiss housing market is characterized by the high price of new construction projects. Purchase price for a home starts at 0.5 million Swiss francs (approx. \$0.5 million). As a result, the majority of Swiss families cannot afford to own their home. The high cost of traditional construction contributes to the situation and creates an opportunity for exporters of less expensive and good quality housing, such as what the Canadian housing sector has to offer.

Wood-frame Housing Market Characteristics

Wood-frame housing does not seem to appeal to Swiss city dwellers. This type of construction is mainly used for farms and mountain cottages. However, the high cost of traditional construction appears to have created an increase in demand.

Canadian exporters of prefabricated and log housing retain a small portion of this market. Only one Swiss company, CALSA AG., was identified as a Canadian log home representative and very few (2 or 3) Swiss firms currently offer wood-frame housing on the national market.

Housing Components (windows, doors and flooring)

A significant number of Swiss companies import semi-manufactured hardwood for front window use while there is practically no demand for finished window product imports. Conversely, the wood flooring market is flourishing with the influence of a majority of interior designers opting for wood.

Local Housing Activities

There was a sharp increase in 1994 in residential construction, mainly due to an insufficient workload in other areas of the construction industry. Therefore, Switzerland is left with an unprecedented number of dwelling vacancies that will consequently lead to a drop in residential construction for the foreseeable future. Dwelling vacancies have skyrocketed to 50,000 units (2 percent of total dwellings) from 25,000 the previous year. New housing construction projects have become quite expensive due to high construction costs brought on by inefficient processes combined with complex planning permit requirements and delivery costs.

New Residential Construction

Euroconstruct has predicted a small increase in activity for this sector over the 1996-2000 period, averaging 1 percent each year. The number of new single-family housing units should remain clearly below 10,000 units per year while the number of new flats for multi-family housing should reach approximately 20,000 units per year for the same period. Housing completions and forecasts for the period 1994-2000 are shown in Table 1.

Repair and Maintenance

The renovation business is very much in demand with a large portion of the existing housing stock dating back to the 1960s and the early 1970s and because of the low quality observed in these construction projects. As the renovation cycle for housing originating from various periods occurs, renovation and housing rehabilitation services are on the rise.

Factors Affecting the Demand for Housing

The population of Switzerland is expected to grow by almost 0.7 percent annually between 1990 and 2000. Immigrants, mainly from former Yugoslavia, formed 19.7 percent of the population as of 1994. The elderly will represent approximately 15.3 percent of the total population by the year 2000. Meanwhile, the number of

Table 1:
Housing Completions and Forecasts (in thousands)

Housing	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
1 + 2 Family dwellings	7.7	7.9	8.2	8.0	7.8	7.8	8.1
Flats dwellings	37.2	32.3	27.8	22.0	20.2	22.2	23.9
Houses	6.4	5.6	4.9	4.0	3.7	4.1	4.3
Total dwellings	44.9	40.2	36.0	30.0	28.0	30.0	32.0
Houses	14.1	13.5	13.3	12.0	11.5	11.9	12.4

Source: Euroconstruct, European Construction to 2000, October 1995.

households will continue to grow at a faster rate than the population, with the number of people per household continuing to decrease as the population ages.

The recession experienced in Europe in the early 1990s has spread to Switzerland due to the slowdown of economic activity that had reached its low point in 1993 with a 0.9 percent decrease. There were signs of improvement in 1994 with an increase in the volume of investments and exports.

Full economic recovery was subsequently further delayed because of the slow growth in demand. While Switzerland is expected to retain its leading position in the export market, a strong Swiss franc will likely favour imports and hamper tourism, among other things. Furthermore, Switzerland's refusal to join the EU might lead to discriminatory practices. This, in turn, will entice Swiss firms to continue their exodus into the European markets that will eventually take its toll on the country's production base.

EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES AND STRATEGIES

Canadian Trade Patterns

Canadian housing companies are active within the Swiss market, although little interest toward them is observed on the part of local companies.

In 1995, Canadian exports to Switzerland reached US\$12 million, a 59-percent increase over 1992. Meanwhile, Swiss imports for these products grew 35 percent from US\$1.3 billion to \$US1.7 billion over the same period. Switzerland is Canada's 10th largest customer for housing-related product exports in Western Europe.

In terms of import market share, Canada accounted for only 1 percent of all Swiss-selected product imports in 1995, an identical figure to that of 1992.

Approximately 83 percent of Canadian exports to Switzerland came from sawn coniferous wood (US\$7 million, an 18-percent increase over 1992) and sawn non-coniferous wood (US\$3 million, a 500-percent increase over 1992).

The only significant volume observed in manufactured product exports to Switzerland lies in the category of prefabricated buildings (US\$1.1 million in 1995, a 900-percent increase over 1992). With these figures, Canada still maintains its 1 percent share of Switzerland's overall imports for these products (US\$86 million in 1995). This clearly indicates further growth potential.

In 1995, Canada's major housing-related exports to Switzerland were sawn coniferous wood and non-coniferous wood, both accounting for approximately 5 percent of Swiss imports, a 6-percent decrease from 1992 for sawn coniferous wood and a 1-percent increase over 1992 for non-coniferous wood.

Opportunities

With large and growing import patterns for housing products, Switzerland offers good trade opportunities for Canadian companies. A list of the fastest growing import markets in Switzerland from 1992 to 1995 are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2:
Fastest Growing Imports in Switzerland,
1992-95**

Category	Percent	US\$ Millions
Sawn coniferous wood	36 %	US\$142 million
Sawn non-coniferous wood	55 %	US\$62 million
Particle board of wood	55 %	US\$95 million
Plywood	55 %	US\$37 million
Wood doors and frames	38 %	US\$64 million
Air conditioning units	32 %	US\$57 million
Prefabricated buildings	8 %	US\$86 million
and their components	183 %	US\$28 million
Electric signalling apparatus	44 %	US\$60 million
Wood kitchen furniture	28 %	US\$166 million
Plastic builders' ware	27 %	US\$132 million

Strategic Approach

Building standards and norms used to be a barrier to the Swiss market but recent developments have changed the situation. Canadian exporters providing appropriately priced (15 percent price differential) wood-frame housing could very well gain a share of the Swiss housing market. But price is a key marketing factor to be considered when forming partnerships with local companies that will be attracted by good incentive packages.

BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Overview

Switzerland is a multilingual country. The majority of Swiss in the centre and northeast part of the country speak German.

French is the principal language of Geneva and the western cantons, and Italian is spoken in the south, especially in Ticino Canton (Lugano/Locarno). English is also widely spoken in business and tourist centres throughout the country.

The Swiss enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, with an exceptionally high cost of living to match.

Everything is available, although at prices higher than in Canada, from modern communications, a wide variety of food, good housing, well-developed tourist facilities, to excellent health care.

Business Customs

As a prosperous, highly developed Western democracy with a modern market economy, Switzerland's business customs and practices are akin to those of other northern European countries. While some Canadian businessmen may find their Swiss counterparts somewhat conservative in such things as dress and the formal use of family (rather than first) names, conducting business in Switzerland is quite similar to how business operates in Canada.

Punctuality, particularly in German-speaking areas, is highly valued. Allowing ample lead time in setting up business appointments is also considered polite; one should not expect to "drop in" without an appointment on a business client.

A valid passport is required to enter Switzerland, but a Swiss visa is not required for business trips of up to 90 days. Swiss residency and work permits for longer stays and employment are extremely difficult to obtain, as the Swiss government imposes severe limitations on immigration and the country's foreign work-force. All foreigners must have a work permit before commencing employment. The complicated process of obtaining a work visa takes several months.

Switzerland is a stable, prosperous democracy with a low rate of violent crime. However, pickpocketing and purse-snatching do occur, especially during peak tourist periods and where major conferences, shows, or exhibits are held. A typical scam used against businessmen is for a thief to grab an attaché case in a hotel or airport while an accomplice distracts the victim.

Swiss national holidays are listed below. Unlike the Canadian practice, holidays in Switzerland falling on a weekend are not compensated for on the following Monday; most of the holiday dates vary yearly according to the Church calendar; and many Swiss cities have one or more local holidays in addition to the national holidays indicated in Table 3.

**Table 3:
Holidays**

January 1	New Year's Day
January 2	Baerzelistag
March/April	Good Friday
March/April	Easter Monday
May	Ascension Day
May	Whit Monday
August 1	Swiss National Day
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	St. Stephen's Day

Business Infrastructure

The Swiss business infrastructure is excellent. The country is served by major international airports in Zurich and Geneva, and smaller ones in Basel and other regional centres. Road and rail networks, despite the country's mountainous terrain, are well-maintained and efficient. Urban public transportation is unsurpassed.

Switzerland's infrastructure is as modern and well-developed as any in the world. The country has an extremely dense and efficient rail network, an extensive road system (complete with tunnels to compensate for the mountainous terrain), 2 major international airports (Zurich, Geneva) and several smaller airports also with international connections, and even a marine with some

30 ocean-going vessels, and a more extensive river service with connections to the North Sea via tugs and barges on the Rhine river. The port of Basel is a major terminus for goods handling, with efficient connections between rail, road and water. Custom-bonded warehouses and duty-free areas exist in and around all major cities.

Distribution and Sales Channels

The most effective method of importation into and distribution within Switzerland varies according to the type of product and location of manufacturing and distribution sites. Capital goods manufacturers may find direct exporting most desirable when contracts with a limited number of customers represent an appreciable share of the market. However, a company new to the Swiss market, or one whose products require training for use and after-sales service, is well advised to engage the services of a technically qualified Swiss agent with good market knowledge.

Swiss buyers of raw materials often use specialized importers. Large orders may be made directly from producers overseas, specialized trading firms, or trans-shippers. As the metals industries, except aluminum, tend to be less developed, imported materials are usually in semi-processed and processed form.

A number of large international trading and transit companies operate in Switzerland. Parent companies in Switzerland carry out the transactions, while foreign affiliates or representatives may handle such aspects as shipping, receipt, and verification of the goods. In some cases, the imported goods never enter Swiss customs territory. These firms are members of the Confederation of Swiss World and Transit Trade Firms (Verband Schweizerischer Transit-und Welthandelsfirmen).

Manufacturers and exporters of consumer goods may deal with a wholesaler (who in most cases is also the importer), engage the services of a representative, or sell directly to buying offices of large retail chains (in the case of mass-produced items).

Most often a representative or agent, who is usually a specialist in one or more product groups, is made responsible for distribution in the whole country.

Many Swiss wholesalers are also importers, and they generally expect exclusive regional or national rights for the imported product. Wholesalers maintain stocks of a range of products, and provide quality control, transportation, warehousing, and financing. Associations of wholesalers have been created for various sectors to protect sector interests and to compete effectively with other forms of distribution. Most wholesalers and importers also belong, either through sector associations or individually, to the Federation of Swiss Importers and Wholesale Traders (Vereinigung des Schweizerischen Import-und Grosshandels.)

Finding a Partner

Two principal types of representatives are provided for by Swiss law.

Agents, who are independent, can work for several firms, and are compensated by commission. Their activities are governed by a 1949 federal law on agency contracts. Swiss law does not permit a principal to inspect the books of his Swiss agent. Travelling salespeople (Handelsreisende), who are employees of the company they represent, are entitled under a 1941 federal law to a fixed salary, with or without commission, and reimbursement of travel and entertainment expenses. Salesmen are required to carry a card indicating whether they are selling to the wholesale or retail trade.

For a company interested in entering the Swiss market, finding and selecting the right person or firm for representation is important and sometimes difficult. Favourable terms may be required to obtain good representation for a new product or an unknown firm. Commission agents are usually preferred over salaried representatives, as in the latter case the foreign firm has no direct control over the person concerned.

Other means of locating representation include visiting trade fairs, advertising in Swiss periodicals, and engaging the services of professional organizations in Switzerland.

Joint Ventures and Licencing

Joint ventures are usually classified under Swiss company law as an ordinary partnership (Einfache Gesellschaft). Legally, a joint venture consists of 2 or more individuals or corporations for the

realization of a particular project. Its name is not protected by law, nor can it be registered in the Swiss Commercial Register (Handelsregister).

The Swiss often rely on licencing arrangements to acquire know-how, and excel in adding value to imported raw goods and services, earning revenue through exports. Licencing can therefore be a successful and profitable market entry strategy for Canadian firms. Many foreign firms have adopted this approach to the Swiss market.

In most sectors, Canadian companies will readily find prospective licencees with the manufacturing and marketing skills to successfully handle the product not only in Switzerland, but also in other countries where the Swiss counterpart has marketing capability. Swiss expertise in exporting, flexibility in adapting to difficult markets, and skill in precision-making and engineering will benefit a Canadian licencor.

The pros and cons of adopting a licencing strategy must, however, be weighed against other methods of market entry. The key to success in licencing lies in screening the selected licensee's capabilities, interest and motivation. Swiss intellectual property legislation protects know-how and patent transfer arrangements; and some cantons allow tax write-offs on intellectual property and tax-free or preferential treatment of royalties earned through know-how transfer and licencing.

Appropriate legal advice can be obtained from competent Swiss-based patent and licencing attorneys. The Licencing Executives Society has an active chapter in Switzerland.

Establishing an Office

The actual mechanics of forming and registering an office in Switzerland can be accomplished in 2 to 3 weeks, but the planning process can be more time-consuming, and should take many factors into consideration. One of the most important is location within Switzerland, because tax laws, availability of work permits, availability of labour force, and availability and cost of business facilities vary widely among cantons. Some cantons may also offer special incentives for foreign investors.

Once a location is selected, the company must be registered in the Swiss Commercial Register

(provided annual turnover amounts to at least SF 100,000; if less, the company may register if all other conditions are met, but is not required to). Registration documents contain the company name, amount of share capital, business purpose, names of directors and managers, and names of those who have signatory powers. Documents must be notarized and super-legalized by an "apostille" (legalization of the notary's signature), and if required by the particular canton, translated by a recognized translator into German, French or Italian.

The company's board of directors must consist of a majority of Swiss citizens resident in Switzerland; foreign-controlled companies usually meet this requirement by nominating Swiss directors who hold shares and perform functions on a fiduciary basis. The manager need not be a Swiss citizen, but at least one person authorized to sign with a sole signature or two persons authorized to sign by joint signature must be Swiss residents.

Registration also includes special wording that the company, if a branch of a foreign corporation, is relatively independent from the corporation's head office from an economic and non-economic point of view, basically enabling the branch to exist as if it were a separate legal entity in Switzerland. The branch must have its own books of account, although they may be kept by the company headquarters or a third party.

Once the company has been registered, the next major concern is employment. Foreign employees must have work permits, which are granted at the cantonal level, by quota, and approved at the federal level. Hiring domestic residents is more straight-forward, and there is no minimum wage, but the company is liable for a host of benefits and compensations, ranging from pension plan contributions to health and accident insurance.

A final consideration is tax liability. As a rule, foreign companies are taxable on income attributable to a Swiss permanent establishment; on income from immovable property located in Switzerland, including gains on the sale of such property; and in some cantons, on income from debts secured by land.

Withholding tax is levied on dividends and certain interest.

Sales of foreign companies to a Swiss resident (or sales through an independent Swiss agent) do not create Swiss tax liability.

Selling Factors and Techniques

New-to-market Canadian exporters are well advised to participate in established trade shows in Switzerland to give their products commercial exposure. Swiss buyers, agents and distributors use the medium of trade shows as a means of finding new products to a much higher degree than their foreign counterparts. It is often more difficult to arrange personal meetings with prospective Swiss business partners if the Canadian company has not already shown its commitment to the Swiss market by participation in such events and showing its product. Personal participation is not mandatory, since catalogue and video displays at shows tend to draw an excellent response. Still, there is no substitute for establishing a personal relationship with one's Swiss business partner.

In addition, for an exporter's offer to be taken seriously, it must be accurate and complete. Swiss buyers who receive offers from all over the world are generally not prepared to devote time to requesting additional details. These must be provided at the outset with objective and detailed information, including exact product description with technical specifications, price details (CIF or FOB) in U.S. dollars or Swiss francs, method of payment, quantities available, packaging, and transport and delivery terms. An offer should also include information on the exporting firm, production equipment available and quality control factors, and financial references. If minimum quantities for accepting orders are set, the exporter should take into account the relatively small size of the Swiss market.

Advertising and Trade Promotion

Despite its relatively small size, Switzerland's cultural and language diversity make it virtually impossible to apply a single advertising policy for the whole market. Regionally targeted advertising is far more advisable. The creation of effective advertising requires an intimate knowledge of the country; approaches that succeed elsewhere may prove unsuitable to Swiss consumers' tastes. It is generally preferable to employ the services of a

Swiss advertising consultant, or one of the several North American advertising firms with affiliates in the country.

Seriousness, unpretentiousness and impeccable presentation are the hallmarks of Swiss advertising. Consumers are influenced by the quality of the printing and graphic presentation, which attain high standards in Switzerland. Not surprisingly, and also in line with the country's high standard of living, advertising expenditure is one of the world's highest on a per capita basis.

Switzerland has one of the greatest per capita newspaper densities in the world. The exceptionally large number of newspapers is primarily due to the country's many languages and cultural areas. Most are oriented to particular regions or localities. The number of dailies has changed only slightly in post-war years, but circulation in the same period has more than doubled. Some dailies are regional editions (Kopfblaeter) of other newspapers. There are over 100 free-of-charge announcement bulletins published on a weekly or more frequent basis.

The Swiss Broadcasting Company (SRG) holds a monopoly on production and broadcasting of Swiss radio and television programming. It is private, non-profit, and financed through compulsory listener/viewer fees. Matching the linguistic division of the country, Switzerland has 3 television stations. An extensive cable system permits reception of radio and television programming from other European countries.

The Swiss place a high emphasis on participation in trade promotion events. Switzerland has major exhibition centres in Zurich, Geneva, Basel, Montreux, Lausanne and Bern, as well as a number of smaller show sites in other cities. All have a full calendar of regional, national and international events, taking place at intervals from twice a year to once every four years.

Pricing Products

In determining the selling price of a product, particularly consumer goods, an exporter must take into account the considerable difference between the price an importer is prepared to pay and the prevailing retail selling price. The cost of distribution and the intermediaries' and retailers' margins may increase the selling price several

fold. Mark ups in Switzerland generally range from 20 to 100 percent, but can be even higher.

Price controls, part of Swiss competition law since 1986, are primarily aimed at reducing abusive prices for goods and services resulting from a lack of competition, and apply only to members of a cartel or similar organizations subject to this law. There are, however, some products whose price is influenced by protective or assisting measures from the government; these are primarily agricultural goods and some pharmaceutical products.

Sales Service and Customer Support

Finding a reliable means of providing rapid and efficient quality service and after-sales customer support is absolutely essential in Switzerland. Concluding a contract is usually dependent upon the ability to provide this follow-up. Means of accomplishing this aim include one or all of the following: opening an office in Switzerland, finding a competent agent or distributor to provide after-sales service, and keeping stock in a Swiss or European warehouse for rapid re-supply.

Selling to the Government

Swiss government agencies use competitive bids for procurement.

In general, the Swiss comply with GATT rules on procurement by government entities (Switzerland implemented the GATT multilateral code Agreement on Government Procurement in 1981).

Procurement at the federal level is generally limited to projects in sectors in which it has primary responsibility—utilities, transportation, communications, defence and construction. Total federal government procurement averages \$6 billion annually. Many public projects are carried out by cantonal and communal governments; their procurement is about two and one half times the federal government amount.

The federal government exercises a great deal of discretion in inviting bids, and selective, discretionary tenders are more common than public discretionary tenders. Contrary to cantonal and communal practice, federal authorities are not required to inform unsuccessful bidders of the tender selected or reasons for the choice. In

general, quality and technical criteria are more important than price. Cantons and communes usually prefer local suppliers. Foreign firms may be required to provide a Swiss bank guarantee if they have no local office or representation.

Notices of Swiss government tenders are published in the official trade journal “Handelsamtblatt”.

Protecting Your Intellectual Property

Switzerland has one of the best regimes in the world for the protection of intellectual property, and protection is afforded equally to foreign and domestic rights-holders. Switzerland is a member of all major international intellectual property rights (IPR) conventions and was an active supporter of a strong IPR text in the GATT Uruguay Round negotiations.

Patent protection is very broad, and Swiss law provides rights to inventors comparable to those in Canada. Switzerland is a member of both the European Patent Convention and the Patent Cooperation Treaty, making it possible for inventors to file a single patent application in Canada (or other PCT country, or any member of the European Patent Convention, once it enters into force) and receive protection in Switzerland. If filed in Switzerland, a patent application must be made in one of the country's 3 official languages (German, French, Italian) and must be accompanied by detailed specifications, and if necessary by technical drawings. The duration of a patent is 20 years. Renewal fees are payable annually on an ascending scale. Patents are not renewable beyond the original 20-year term.

Switzerland recognizes well-known trademarks and has established simple procedures to register and renew all marks. The initial period of protection is 20 years. Service marks also enjoy full protection. Trademark infringement is very rare in Switzerland—street vendors are relatively scarce here, and even they tend to shy away from illegitimate or grey-market products.

Need for Local Legal Assistance

Where Canadian citizens are involved in disputes (with private individuals or business enterprises) and the controversy cannot be settled amicably, the normal recourse is to seek remedy provided by the law of the appropriate cantonal jurisdiction.

Regulatory Issues

Some 500 Swiss cartels have a strong determining voice in what comes into the country, how it is packaged, where it is sold, who may sell it, and how much it will cost. Services are also affected.

A recent OECD study found that average prices of goods and services for private consumption in Switzerland are 40 percent higher than in other OECD countries. Price-fixing or exclusive supply contracts exist in 90 percent of 72 industrial activities, ranging from building products to health insurance. Complaints regarding the system come primarily from consumer groups, because once a producer or exporter, through a distributor, joins a cartel, the protection afforded is appealing.

The Swiss have recently established a Cartel Commission to review and draft further legislation on competition policy. Ongoing effort to make Switzerland's laws Euro-compatible should lead to further liberalization.

Switzerland imposes technical standards and testing and labelling requirements for certain products; Swiss electrical safety standards (SEV-Standards) require that electrical equipment be tested before it can be marketed; tests may be costly and time-consuming. In most cases, procedures can be simplified for those manufacturers whose equipment has already been cleared in another country participating in the CENELEC (European Committee for Electro-technical Standardization) Certification Agreement (CCA). Other certifying requirements apply to drugs (prescription and over-the-counter), which must receive approval from the inter-cantonal drug commission. Imported products must also be labelled in all three official languages (German, French, Italian).

The Swiss customs tariff uses the Harmonized System (HS) for the numerical classification of goods. All countries are afforded GATT most-favoured-nation treatment. Customs duties on imports are, with few exceptions, based on weight rather than on value.

In many instances, especially with high-value, low-weight items, customs duties are almost negligible. With tariff rates averaging about 3.2 percent in the industrial goods sectors,

Switzerland's tariff policy favours the development of trade.

In addition to customs duties, the Swiss customs administration levies a 3-percent statistical tax on the total customs duty payable. This fee is designed to cover the cost of preparing relevant foreign trade statistics.

In January 1995, Switzerland introduced a value-added-tax system, similar to the VAT in the EU countries, to replace its old turnover tax system. The main advantage is the elimination of the so-called "hidden tax", which prevented companies from deducting the turnover tax on investment purchases. The VAT is levied on all deliveries of goods and services in Switzerland, including deliveries of investment and consumer goods, deliveries of animals and plants, consulting and entertaining services, licence fees and the sale of rights. Imports of goods and services are also subject to VAT. The standard VAT rate is 6.5 percent.

Swiss industry is increasingly adopting ISO 9000 standards. More Swiss producers are seeking certification, even though Swiss certification according to ISO standards is not yet recognized by the European Union. To overcome this, Swiss exporters are turning to agents or their own subsidiaries in the EU to obtain equivalent certification under the EN 29000 series of European Quality Management Standards, or double certification through an international network of private quality management associations.

Swiss industries incorporating foreign components in their end-products, especially in machinery and instrumentation (key Swiss export commodities), increasingly specify ISO 9000 standards for imports. Under the EN 29000 directives issued by the EU, the equivalent ISO 9000 series of norms are becoming a sales factor in the EU, and in Switzerland, even when not explicitly stated.

EDC Financial Risk Assessment

The Export Development Corporation (EDC) helps Canadian companies compete in world markets through the provision of financial and risk management services. These include export credit insurance, financing to foreign buyers of Canadian goods and services, and guarantees.

The following information was obtained from the EDC Country Risks and Opportunities book (fall, 1996).

Current Market Conditions

The household sector is at a virtual standstill. Despite low inflation and low interest rates, consumer spending is highly restrained by depressed consumer attitudes and worsening unemployment, currently at 5.6 percent, which is high by Swiss standards.

Only a mild recovery is expected for 1997. The outlook for modest improvement is attributed to subdued inflation, low interest rates, the recent weakening in the Swiss franc and some help from the expected improvement in external demand. Notwithstanding, the requirement by government to deal with the lagged impact arising from the recent double digit monetary growth and a widening fiscal deficit, estimated to be at 2.6 percent of GDP in 1997, could act as a clamp on the already weakened economy.

Credit Quality Trends

Depressed economic conditions have held Swiss bankruptcies at high levels over the last four years. Deteriorating economic conditions since early 1995 have led to an increase by 2.1 percent to the annualized rate of 9,900 thousand in total bankruptcies for the first eight months of 1996. The incidence of commercial bankruptcies was even higher, increasing at a rate of 9 percent to the annualized rate of 4,100 thousand for the same period.

Production declines in the country's manufacturing sector are estimated to have bottomed out in the second half. The recent

modest weakening in the Swiss franc and the stabilization of orders in the machinery sector, at albeit low levels, has brought some consolation to Swiss businesses. However, the Swiss franc still remains relatively high and represents a competitive disadvantage for Swiss exports. The deep recession in the construction sector is expected to continue because of the oversupply of commercial office space—a phenomenon driven by the slowdown in the services sector. Business investment in production capacity is expected to continue to maintain a certain dynamic, though the pace of activity will be reduced in 1997.

Swiss businesses continue to struggle against a number of major obstacles. The country's regulatory and cartel authorities have impeded progress in liberalizing business conditions. Businesses will continue to suffer the disadvantages associated with Switzerland's outsider status vis-a-vis the European Union. This and the competitive disadvantage associated with the still relatively high Swiss franc have encouraged smaller- and medium-sized companies to relocate operations in the EU or preferably abroad. In addition, the still relatively high Swiss franc is expected to continue to force businesses to restructure or consolidate. The ongoing restructuring in the banking industry in Switzerland's over-banked economy is expected to continue. Further, relative to their EU business neighbours, Swiss businesses face relatively higher costs of unemployment insurance and social benefits.

Collection Experience

The overall collection experience in Switzerland is good. Open account trading terms are the norm. There are no credit or financial issues.

CONTACTS

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Housing Export Centre

700 Montreal Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P7

Tel.: 1-800-465-6212 or
(613) 748-2000
Fax: (613) 748-2302

Canadian Government Departments and Services

Department of Foreign Affairs and
International Trade (DFAIT)

InfoCentre
Lester B. Pearson Building
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Tel.: 1-800-267-8376 or
(613) 944-4000
Fax: (613) 996-9709
FaxLink: (613) 944-4500
InfoCentre Bulletin Board:
Tel.: 1-800-628-1581 or
(613) 944-1581

Europe Trade Division
Central Europe (REO)
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1A 0G2

Tel: (613) 995-3774
Fax: (613) 995-8756

Canadian Embassy in Switzerland

Kirchenfeldstrasse 88
CH-3005 Bern, Switzerland

Tel: (011-41-31) 352-63-81
Fax: (011-41-31) 352-73-15

International Trade Centres

Newfoundland

International Trade Centre
P.O. Box 8950
Atlantic Place
215 Water Street
Suite 504
St. John's, NF A1B 3R9

Tel.: (709) 772-5511
Fax: (709) 772-5093

Prince Edward Island

International Trade Centre
P.O. Box 1115
Confederation Court Mall
134 Kent Street
Suite 400
Charlottetown, PE C1A 7M8

Tel.: (902) 566-7443
Fax: (902) 566-7450

Nova Scotia

International Trade Centre
P.O. Box 940, Station M
1801 Hollis Street
Halifax, NS B3J 2V9

Tel.: (902) 426-7540
Fax: (902) 426-5218

New Brunswick

International Trade Centre
1045 Main Street
Unit 103
Moncton, NB E1C 1H1

Tel.: (506) 851-6452
Fax: (506) 851-6429

Quebec

International Trade Centre
5 Place Ville-Marie
Seventh Floor
Montreal, PQ H3B 2G2

Tel.: (514) 283-6328
Fax: (514) 283-8794

Ontario

International Trade Centre
Dominion Public Building
1 Front St. West
Fourth Floor
Toronto, ON M5J 1A4

Tel.: (416) 973-5053
Fax: (416) 973-8161

Manitoba

International Trade Centre
P.O. Box 981
330 Portage Avenue
8th Floor
Winnipeg, MB R3G 2V2

Tel.: (204) 983-5851
Fax: (204) 983-3182

International Trade Centres (cont'd)

Saskatchewan	International Trade Centre The S.J. Cohen Building 119-4 th Avenue South Suite 401 Saskatoon, SK S7K 5X2	Tel.: (306) 975-5315 Fax: (306) 975-5334
Alberta <i>* Edmonton office is also responsible for Northwest Territories</i>	International Trade Centre Canada Place 9700 Jasper Avenue Room 540 Edmonton, AB T5J 4C3 510-5th Street S.W. Suite 1100 Calgary, AB T2P 3S2	Tel.: (403) 495-2944 Fax: (403) 495-4507 Tel.: (403) 292-4575 Fax: (403) 292-4578
British Columbia <i>* Vancouver office is also responsible for the Yukon</i>	International Trade Centre 300 West Georgia Street Suite 2000 Vancouver, BC V6B 6E1	Tel.: (604) 666-0434 Fax: (604) 666-0954

Export Development Corporation (EDC)

Ottawa	151 O'Connor Street Ottawa, ON K1A 1K3	Tel.: (613) 598-2500 Fax: (613) 237-2690
Vancouver	One Bentall Centre 505 Burrard Street Suite 1030 Vancouver, BC V7X 1M5	Tel.: (604) 666-6234 Fax: (604) 666-7550
Calgary	510-5th Street S.W. Suite 1030 Calgary, AB T2P 3S2	Tel.: (403) 292-6898 Fax: (403) 292-6902
Winnipeg <i>* office also serves Saskatchewan</i>	330 Portage Avenue Eighth Floor Winnipeg, MB R3C 0C4	Tel.: (204) 983-5114 Fax: (204) 983-2187
Toronto	National Bank Building 150 York Street Suite 810 P.O. Box 810 Toronto, ON M5H 3S5	Tel.: (416) 973-6211 Fax: (416) 862-1267
London	Talbot Centre 148 Fullarton Street Suite 1512 London, ON N6A 5P3	Tel.: (519) 645-5828 Fax: (519) 645-5580
Montreal	Tour de la Bourse 800 Victoria Square Suite 4520 P.O. Box 124 Montreal, PQ H4Z 1C3	Tel.: (514) 283-3013 Fax: (514) 878-9891
Halifax	Purdy's Wharf, Tower 2 1969 Upper Water Street Suite 1410 Halifax, NS B3J 3R7	Tel.: (902) 429-0426 Fax: (902) 423-0881

Swiss Government Offices in Canada

Embassy of Switzerland	5 Marlborough Avenue Ottawa, ON K1N 8E6	Tel.: (613) 235-1837 Fax: (613) 563-1394
Consul General of Switzerland	1572 Dr. Penfield Avenue Montreal, PQ H3G 1C4	Tel.: (514) 932-7181 Fax: (514) 932-9028
Consul General of Switzerland	154 University Avenue Suite 601 Toronto, ON M5H 3Y9	Tel.: (416) 593-5371 Fax: (416) 593-5083

Swiss Government Offices in Canada (cont'd)

Consul General of Switzerland	World Trade Centre 790-999 Canada Place Vancouver, BC V6C 3E1	Tel.: (604) 684-2231 Fax: (604) 684-2806
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Multilateral Organizations

World Bank	Washington, DC 20433 U.S.A.	Tel.: (202) 477-1234 Fax: (202) 477-6391
Office for Liaison with International Financial Institutions	Canadian Embassy 501 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. Washington, DC 20001	Tel.: (202) 682-7719 Fax: (202) 682-7726

Business and Professional Organizations in Canada

Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce (Montreal) Inc.	1572 Dr. Penfield Avenue Montreal, PQ H3G 1C4	Tel.: (514) 937-5822
Swiss Canadian Chamber of Commerce (Ontario) Inc.	21 Iron Street Etobicoke, ON M9W 5E3	Tel.: (416) 243-1201 Fax: (416) 243-1808
Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters Canada	99 Bank Street, Suite 250 Ottawa, ON K1P 6B9	Tel.: (613) 238-8888 Fax: (613) 563-9218

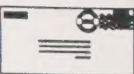
Major Swiss Banks in Canada

Credit Suisse Canada	Credit Suisse Centre, Suite 1300 525 University Avenue Toronto, ON M5G 2K6	Tel.: (416) 351-3500 Fax: (416) 351-3630
Union Bank of Switzerland (Canada)	154 University Avenue Toronto, ON M5H 3Z4	Tel.: (416) 343-1800 Fax: (416) 343-1900

Canadian Banks with European Regional Offices


Bank of Montreal	D-6000 Frankfurt am, Main 17 Ulmenstrasse 37-39 Frankfurt, Germany 710104	
Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce European Operations Office	Cottons Centre Cottons Lane London, SE1 2QL, England	Tel.: (011-441-71) 234-6000
National Bank of Canada Europe Regional Office	Princes House 95 Gresham Street London, England EC2V 7LU	
Royal Bank of Canada AG	PO Box 71 07 14 Lyonner Strasse 15 60497 Frankfurt am Main, Germany	
The Toronto-Dominion Bank	Triton Court 14/18 Finsbury Square London, England EC2A 1DB	
Hongkong Bank of Canada	10 Lower Thames Street PO Box 506 London, England EC3R 6AE	

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FAX TO
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 Outside Canada
1-613-748-2016



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	Card Number	
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	Payment enclosed \$ <div></div>	
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	SHIPPING CHOICE Regular Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Courier <input type="checkbox"/>	ADD Shipping & Handling	B	
	Subtotal (Add A + B)		C	
U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ORDERS Please pay subtotal C in U.S. Funds (do not add GST or PST)	Registration #100756428	ADD GST (7% of subtotal C)	D	Refer to Shipping and Handling Charges on the back of this form for the shipping and handling amount.
	Subtotal (Add C + D)		E	
	Quebec residents add PST (6.5% of Subtotal E)		F	
	Total (Add E + F)		G	
				SEE EXAMPLE ON REVERSE

Shipping and Handling Charges

Points	Canada Regular Rates	Canada Courier Rates	U.S. Regular Air Rates	U.S. Courier Rates	International Regular Air Rates	International Courier Rates	Europe Courier Rates
1	2.55	5.00	5.00	11.00	7.00	24.00	19.00
2	3.65	8.00	6.50	14.00	9.00	30.00	25.00
3 to 5	5.80	11.07	8.11	30.75	12.18	63.75	47.75
6 to 10	6.18	11.07	12.46	34.75	20.61	88.75	55.75
11 to 20	6.43	12.35	18.08	42.75	38.77	118.75	71.75
21 to 40	6.94	14.90	23.81	58.75	64.65	193.75	103.75
41 to 60	7.44	17.62	29.48	74.75	68.12	253.75	129.75
61 to 80	7.95	20.51	35.15	90.75	117.36	313.75	149.75
81 to 100	8.45	23.35	40.92	106.75	146.60	373.75	169.75
101 to 120	8.96	26.20	46.59	120.75	166.71	433.75	189.75
121 to 140	9.46	29.05	52.31	134.75	184.72	493.75	209.75
141 to 160	9.97	31.90	58.00	148.75	207.45	553.75	229.75
161 to 180	10.47	34.75	63.71	162.75	228.92	613.75	249.75
181 to 200	10.98	35.60	69.38	176.75	250.29	658.75	269.75
201 to 220	11.48	40.45	75.05	190.75	N/A	718.75	289.75
221 to 240	11.99	43.30	80.72	204.75	N/A	778.75	309.75
241 to 260	12.49	46.15	86.49	218.75	N/A	838.75	329.75
261 to 280	13.00	49.00	92.21	232.75	N/A	901.75	349.75
281 to 300	13.50	51.85	97.88	246.75	N/A	958.75	369.75
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ORDER NUMBER	REPORT TITLE <small>Please be sure the order number and report title match the listing</small>	1 QTY	2 ITEM AMOUNT \$	3 TOTAL AMOUNT 1 x 2	4 SHIPPING POINTS	5 TOTAL SHIPPING POINTS 1 x 4
NHA 8003	Brazil	1	35.-	35.-	3	3
NHA 8009	Western Europe	2	23.-	46.-	3	6
					3	
					3	
SOURCE <small>(How did you hear about the product?)</small> TV AD <input type="checkbox"/> CATALOGUE NEWSPAPER <input type="checkbox"/> FLYER/BROCHURE MAGAZINE <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER		Subtotal Column 3			A	81.-
		SHIPPING CHOICE Regular Mail <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Courier <input type="checkbox"/>			ADD Shipping & Handling B 6.18	
		Subtotal (Add A + B)			C	87.18
U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL ORDERS Please pay subtotal C in U.S. Funds (do not add GST or PST)		Registration #100756428			ADD GST (7% of subtotal C)	
					Subtotal (Add C + D)	
		Quebec residents add PST (6.5% of Subtotal E)			F -	
		Total (Add E + F)			G 93.28	

Subtotal Column 5: 9

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